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ABSTRACT

To explore the correlation between unemployment and child abuse rates, a literature review was conducted and the phenomenon was examined in a rural Inland Northwest county (X County) of 9,800 population which derived its main income from lumber and agriculture. Monthly substantiated child abuse cases were tallied from the Department of Health and Welfare, Youth Services records from January 1978 through December 1983 and correlated with state unemployment rates. Contrary to the literature, survey findings did not support direct correlation between unemployment and child abuse rates. Over the 5-year period, during the month of September when child abuse was the highest, unemployment was lowest. Upon investigation of the geographical and cultural aspects of X County, the unanticipated factor of predictable unemployment appeared. Findings, substantiated by personal interviews, indicated family stress was less in X County during periods of anticipated seasonal unemployment than when employment was high. As long as anticipated unemployment did not exceed a 1- to 3-month period, family stress was lower during periods of unemployment. These factors appear to be particular to many rural communities and need to be recognized so that preventative measures can be initiated at crucial times of the year. (NEC)

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Unemployment and Child Abuse

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PRESENTATION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE: SOCIAL WORK IN RURAL AREAS, JULY 28-31, 1984 UNIVERSITY OF MAINE-ORONO

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PRESENTATION FORMAT: Research paper to present with visual correlation graphs and survey tables.

ABSTRACT

TITLE: Unemployment and Child Abuse in a Rural Community: An Inverse Relationship.

RELATIONSHIP TO INSTITUTE THEMES: This research pertains to rural diversity. In particular the effects of geographical and cultural differences on social service delivery. Also understanding the realities of this particular community could lead to the puncturing of rural myths.

SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL IDEAS ALONG WITH CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS: The relationship of unemployment and child abuse was not correlated as the author had hypothesized. The hypothesis for this research was that the rate of child abuse is directly correlated with the unemployment rate. X County in the Inland Northwest was studied. It has a population of 9,800 and the main source of income is from lumber and agriculture. The monthly substantiated child abuse cases were tallied from the Department of Health & Welfare, Youth Services records between January, 1978 through December, 1983. They were correlated with the revised and unadjusted unemployment rates from the State Department of Employment for the same period. This was a multiple subject survey using a quasi-experimental design. The results of the survey indicated that the hypothesis was not supported by the data collected. In fact there was a directlly opposite correlation. Upon investigation of the geographical and cultural aspects of X County an unanticipated factor appeared, that being, predictable unemployment, which the author had not considered. This study appears to differ significantly from the literature reviewed however most research appears to have been done in areas where unemployment was not anticipated and unpredicted. Findings, substansiated by personal interviews indicate in X County where there are seasional anticipated unemployment periods family stress is less then when employment periods are high. In X County logging employees know that road "break up" occurs every year. They usually work 10-12 hours hours a day when employed and look forward to the relief. They know they will return to work as soon as roads and weather conditions change. The same is generally true for ranchers and farmers.

As long as the anticipated unemployment does not exceed the anticipated period of 1 to 3 months, family stress is lower. The community also accepts and anticipates this phenomena since the majority of the population is employed in lumber or agriculture.

These factors are particular to many rural communities and need to be recognized so that preventative measures can be iniated at the crucial times of the year.

Unemployment and Child Abuse

Introduction

To a large extent the prospects for a child depends on what is happening in his/her family. The vast majority of children are members of families and the family is the most important factor in their lives. Home and family are the first conditions of life for the child according to the final report of the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy (1940, p. 32).

> The child has food and shelter if his family has a home and provides food. He is content and happy if he is well, if he has parents and others to love and be loved by. Education begins in the home, where he learns to speak, to walk, to handle things, to play, to demand, to give, to experiment. Religious faith is imparted in the family long before he goes to church. The all-important sense of security and of "belonging" are first and best established in the family circle. Adventure and safety, contentment and rebellion, cooperation, sharing, self-reliance, and mutual aid are family experiences.

These words could have been written today. Children are still dependent upon their families and the family remains to be the most important factor in their lives according to Leo (1982).

The Problem

A growing body of literature and research has been accumulating in the past few decades documenting case histories of child abuse within the family. Investigations cite numerous factors related to this phenomenon.

Low economic status is one of these factors. Since unemployment can lead to the low economic status of a family, it seems reasonable to also list that as a factor. However, few studies have been conducted to show the correlation between unemployment and child abuse.

The rate of unemployment in the United States is at an all time high with 1 out of every 10 employees finding themselves jobless. (The Kiplinger Washington

Letter, 1983). Thus, more families are finding themselves in a low economic status then ever before. How this affects families and in particular the children of the unemployed, remains to be seen.

Unemployment in the Inland northwest is not a new phenomenon. The forest industry and agricultural production provides the major source of employment. Every year these employees can anticipate periods of unemployment due to weather conditions and production demands. When they are not employed they normally remain at home with their families waiting for the weather to improve and/or the production demands to increase. These layoff periods range from two weeks at a time to as long as three months.

The slump in the housing industry during 1982 resulted in more layoffs over a longer period of time than usual.

The purpose of this research is to explore the correlation between the rate of unemployment and the rate of child abuse. Literature showing the effects of unemployment on the employee and his family, the causative factors for child abuse and the connection between the two will be reviewed. Then the methodology and design to the particular phenomenon in a rural county in the Inland northwest will be described.

Review of Literature

Unemployment

Glen Elder, Jr. has some fascinating and useful information which helps us to understand the phenomenon of unemployment quite clearly. His book Children of the Great Depression is one of the most critical reviews of unemployment which has been written.

Every member of a family is affected in different ways by unemployment and extensive research grew out of the Great Depression.

Parents

> Role failure on the part of the husband and father tends to shift economic responsibilities to other family members. As economic conditions worsened in the 30's, employment became more compelling to women and acceptable to their husbands, despite hostile sentiment in the community (Bakke, 1940, p. 184).

This resulted in women seeking employment who had never worked before. They only did so, however, when savings were depleted and credit extended beyond acceptable limits (Elder, 1974, p. 28).

> In normal times and crises, the occupational success of men is generally related to their power and status in the family. When father's authority in the family derived mainly from cultural traditions or affection among family members, it was most likely to survive economic failure. In the only study which systematically explored the causal effects of unemployment, the wife's attitude was a determining factor in status change (Komarovsky, 1940).

Tradition as a basis of authority referred to the wife's belief that family leadership is the husband's right and responsibility. Unemployment proved to be a significant cause of authority loss among husbands only in families in which the wife, prior to the Depression, held utilitarian attitudes (Elder, 1974, p. 30). Given the interdependence of family roles, change in conjugal relations tends to have corresponding effects on parent-child interaction (Komarovsky, 1940).

> Loss of earning power and a job are the most disruptive of family relations when they result in maladaptive reactions--apathy, depression, and self-pity, and forms of social retreat or withdrawal, such as heavy drinking (Elder, 1974, p. 92).

Unemployment and a sudden loss of income disrupt accustomed reciprocities in marriage, including the relative contributions and expectations of each partner, and necessitate hard choices among restricted expenditures. In these respects, the stage is set for destructive criticism, interminable quarrels, and hostile outbursts. Even among the more considerate and empathic wives,

deprivations and a wearing imbalance in family contributions inevitably foster greater awareness of the husband's faults. Economic hardship entails sacrifice, and choices on expenditure force the question of who is to sacrifice or give up what. Marriage and family life may thus become an arena of competing interests for scarce resources. Agreement on priorities is hampered by restricted marital communication when topics are "too sore" to discuss (Elder, 1974, p. 93). Criticsm of the husband's faults as a provider, and attempts by the more powerful parent to enforce his will were common elements in most batt es. Among conflicted families in which father ruled the household, arguments and hostile outbursts were occasioned by challenges to his authority on the expenditure of family income. By focusing on hardships in social conflicts, we have failed to acknowledge the large number of families in all classes and deprivational groupings which were relatively free of dissention, at least on the basis of our data (Elder, 1974, p. 94).

Children

> Children's evaluations of father are known to be influenced by mother's attitude toward him. In this respect, mothers who openly attributed blame for status loss to their husband's inadequacies would markedly increase the sensitivity of children to his social failure. Such attitudes were not obtained from the mothers, but qualitative materials from interviews do suggest the effect of mother's shame concerning the father on children's attitudes (Elder, 1974, p. 58).

Elder claims that children's sentiments toward parents in the early years may have had a circular, reinforcing effect which aroused negative feelings toward the father.

In forming evaluations of parents, girls appear most responsive to family relations, while family status has a stronger effect on the attitudes of boys.

The attractiveness of age-mates (peers) stands as the most significant effect of economic hardship. This reflects the aspirations and needs even more than social involvement (Elder, 1974, p. 94).

Children from these families vividly recalled father's drinking bouts, prolonged "silent treatments", mother's nagging, name-calling, and ridicule. On the other hand a large amount of children remember no evidence of marital feuds or severe parent-child conflicts in at least half of the deprived homes. Over 2/5 of the girls from deprived families reported little, if any, friction among family members; a proportion which is slightly larger among the boys (Elder, 1974, p. 94).

The author raises some interesting questions about harmony and conflict under conditions of economic hardship. What accounts for the difference? What conditions, social and phychological, distinguished harmonious from conflicted families? Elder (1974) claims that it bears directly upon an understanding of family adaptations. Elder does not mention maltreatment of children in this book, however, eludes to the possibility. His examination of the deprived family of the Depression era appears to be significant, however, current economic trends are similar to the great depression.

Doug MacDonald (1981) claims that studies document the way the unemployed worker is subject to depression and loss of self-esteem which gives rise to increased incidents of such things as mental breakdown and alcoholism. This affects the immediate family in some cases resulting in a final breakdown of the family unit (p. 15). As in Elder (1974), MacDonald (1981, p. 17) says that roles may shift, changing the delicate balance of power and creating stresses that may ultimately lead to family breakdown.

There are authors with differing viewpoints regarding what happens when a person becomes unemployed. One is Katherine Briar (1980, p. 901) who says that, "There are few resources open to the unemployed worker who has difficulty finding employment; most do not resort to acts of violence or self-destruction even though their desperation may be profound."

The popular literature regarding the status of unemployed persons suggests some of the problems, stages, and benefits that can result.

Mary Rodgers (1975, p. 36) says that job losses and layoffs are a growing problem that causes worry. "Losing your job is like getting a divorce," said one woman. Each case of unemployment is different and a lot depends on individual circumstances and the nature of the people involved. The similarities of financial problems and emotional pressures are in every case.

The psychological problems of unemployment have a way of surfacing in unexpected guises--physical illness, heavy drinking and marital fights. Sex would be thought of as something that could be engaged in when you don't have any money, but according to Rodgers a man often looses interest and also the woman may be afraid of becoming pregnant. She says (p. 37) that there are four stages that the unemployed go through: shock, denial, reality, and finally thinking about what comes next. The important thing is to keep trying because according to one man, "You start drinking beer and looking at TV all day and you're dead." (Rogers, 1975, p. 38) A woman who went into a panic when her husband lost his job traced it back to childhood memories of the Depression. Her parents had talked in whispers as though there were a death in the family. (Rodgers, 1975.)

Rodgers goes on to say that the loss of a job is not always a disaster and gives examples of some families which gained something valuable from the experience. Married persons who became depressed, but were not depressed at the same time as their spouses would help each other. Some parents believe their children are stronger and more self-reliant for the experience (Rodgers, 1975, p. 163).

The term child abuse is being used in this research paper. It is a term which combines the definitions of child abuse, child neglect, and sexual misuse, as the following authors have used.

Child Abuse

Dr. Charles Kempe (Fontana, 1976, p. 56) uses the term battered-child syndrome as a descriptive name for the nature of a child's injuries, which commonly includes abrasions, bruises, lacerations, human bites, hematoma, brain injury, deep body injury, pulled joints, combinations of fractures of the arms, legs, skull, and ribs, burns and scalds, and marks left after strapping or tying up. "Roughly speaking, the injuries generally result from knocking the child about, beating or whipping it with the nearest object, throwing it around like a pillow--literally battering it."

Fontana (1976, p. 17) claims that parents who do these things are tormented individuals of many sorts: "angry, compulsive, rigidly authoritarian, lacking in warmth, passive, dependent, aggressive, guilt-ridden, self-destructive, brutal, psychotic, isolated, emotionally immature, unable to relate, of borderline intelligence, often people who were themselves abused as children." They may not have all of these features, however, the more of

these features present constitute a greater threat. "Some literally cry out for help, and others don't give a _ _ _ _, but relatively few are the monsters and maniacs as nonabusers are inclined to think."

Child Neglect

Fontana (1976, p. 45) says, "Neglect obviously involves failure to clothe the child adequately, failure to attend to the child's medical or educational needs. It may or may not be deliberate whereas abuse is more often than not deliberate. Neglect may not be abuse, but it is maltreatment" (misuse). Some describe neglect as "passive abuse".

Sexual Misuse

Fontana (1976, p. 87) says "Sexual abuse (misuse) can include rape, forced or consensual; sexual misconduct; sexual fondling; forced and consensual sodomy; endangering the child's welfare in terms of morals, health and safety; and incest as complete sexual intercourse between close blood relations."

Let us now review the literature which links unemployment and child abuse.

Economic Factors and Child Abuse

Steinberg, Catalano and Dooley (1981) conducted a study to explore the association of reported child maltreatment with one extrafamiliar factor--community economic change. Their research and investigation disclosed the following: The maltreatment is more likely to occur among families experiencing unemployment (according to Galston, 1964; Gil, 1971 & Light, 1973).

Aggregate-level analyses use geographic or temporal units. For example, overall rates of abuse are higher in regions characterized by a high proportion of low-income families and in areas characterized by unusually high rates of unemployment. A potential problem with such studies is that biases inherent

in the reporting of maltreatment may underrepresent its incidence among affluent families (thus exaggerating the association of poverty or unemployment with child maltreatment). The most recent research on the validity of reporting procedures, however, suggest that the observed relation between economic strain and maltreatment is a genuine one (Garbarino, 1978). (Steinberg, 1981, p. 975).

Steinberg, Catalano & Dooley use a longitudinal approach to permit separation in time of economic change and reported (1981, p. 972). Thus, lagged relationships of earlier economic change to later maltreatment can be evaluated, making possible the identification of those lag intervals for which the relationship is strongest.

Steinberg (1981, p. 977) etc., describes their model:

> Based on the cross-sectional analyses of economic stress and child, extrapolating from the model suggested for the relation of economic change and adult disorder by Dooley and Catalano (1980), we offer the following causal pattern as a working model:

Net loss of jobs at the community level leads to actual or anticipated individual job loss and increased parental stress. This stress, in turn, may lead to increased parental stress. This stress, in turn, may lead to increased child abuse, particularly among families with existing tension or members predisposed to be violent. Job loss and attendant material deprivation and loss of social status may produce feelings of frustration and lead to being on welfare, seeking a new job, relocation, adjusting to loss of former workmates and adjusting to a decline in standard of living. In combination with the everyday demands of parenthood, such coping may tax the vulnerable parent's emotional and instrumental resources, reducing the parent's patience with and ability to care for the child.

The authors go on to say that insofar as job loss results in a parent's spending more time at home, the increased parent-child contact increases the opportunity for undesirable interaction. Moreover, job loss may result in individuals who are unaccustomed to caring for children being placed in a full-time child-rearing role; the difficulty of this role transition may lead to child maltreatment. Finally, increased job loss in the community may affect parents not themselves experiencing joblessnes. Changes in the economic climate of a community may result in changed economic expectations and morale, thus modifying the social climate in which families function. (Steinberg, 1981, p. 977)

One clear hypothesis is generated: Job loss is positively associated with subsequent reported child abuse (Steinberg, 1981).

The method for Steinberg's longitudinal study used two standard metropolitan statistical areas for comparison. Maltreatment data was collected from the Los Angeles County Department of Social Services and from Orange County. Ninety percent of the reported cases were verified as actual cases of maltreatment. The length of the study was monthly reports from February 1975 to December 1977. An interaction between the unemployment rate and size of the work force was also included to allow a test of the "inferred inadequacy" hypothesis which implies that unemployed individuals are more likely to attribute their misfortunes to personal deficiencies when the size of the work force is expanding than when it is contracting. The advantage of a longitudinal over a cross-section approach is the former controls for "place effects" of community characteristics which, when omitted from the analysis may lead to spurious inferences of association between variables (Firbough, 1980). The disadvantage of longitudinal analyses is that "time effects" may produce spurious associations.

The results from this research shows abuse is inversely related to size of the work force (Steinberg, 1981).

In a study by the Child Welfare League of America, the question was asked: "What are the operative factors that result in the discontinuance of abusive and neglectful behavior"? (Shapiro, 1980, p. 242). One hundred seventy one abusive families were interviewed and these were the findings: "Families tended to be headed by females, above average in size, living at the poverty level, and relatively isolated." (Shapiro, 1980, p. 242.)

Star (1980, p. 341) claims that the assulters characteristics in family violence include: possessiveness, role confusion and the inability to empathize. Functioning in violent families is characterized by inappropriate marital expectations, limited knowledge of parenting, inability to relate and limited ability to tolerate stress.

A review of professional opinions in the literature on the child abusing parent by Spinetta (1973) revealed (among other factors) that although socio-economic factors might sometimes place added stress on basic personality weakness, these stresses are not of themselves sufficient or necessary causes of misuse.

Wolock & Horowitz (1979) compared 380 welfare recipients receiving protective services from the public child welfare agency with a random sample of 144 recipients not identified as maltreating their children. The results support the centrality of material and social deprivation as factors leading to child maltreatment. A high level of material deprivation characterized both groups; however, the families in which maltreatment occurred, live under poorer material circumstances, had more socially and materially deprived childhoods, are more socially isolated, and have more children (p. 192).

Pelton (1978, p. 615) claims that there is substantial evidence of a strong relationship between poverty and child abuse and neglect in terms

of both prevalence and severity of consequences. He goes on to say, "The myth of classlessness persists, despite evidence and logic to the contrary, because it serves certain functions, such as allowing many professionsals to view child abuse and neglect as psychodynamic problems within the context of a medical model. The myth diverts attention and resources from the real poverty-related problems underlying child abuse and neglect and from needed concrete services."

Wells (1978) claims that child abuse is a symptom of family trouble, thus family relationships and the social forces that impinge on the family provide the focus for investigation. He proposed that causes of child abuse may be attributable to at least two of three conditions: weak psychological mechanisms in the parents, deprivation of psychologically supportive significant others, and/or deprivation of supportive social or physical conditions. Thirty families were interviewed and the findings revealed that abusive parents suffered more deficiencies in the psychological and psychosocial than in the social-need areas.

Light (1973) verified the finds of Gil, Kempe, Brandt, Steele, and Vincent De Francis. Examing the relationships that discriminate abusing families, he found that abusing families tend to be characterized by clusters of unemployment, large families, and social isolation. Further analysis regarding the unemployed found: 1. Abusing families where the father is unemployed are much more likely to live in an apartment than a house, relative to comparable non-abusing families where the father is unemployed. 2. Abusing families where the father is unemployed are less likely to "share their quarters" with other persons of families.

Jim Mead, founder of For Kids Sake (1980) stated that the economy was one of the number one predicaters of child misuse and neglect.

In her dissertation on Helping the Unemployed Client, Katherine Briar (1980, p. 895) spoke of the following findings:

> The link between unemployment and the problems that clients bring to social service agency doors is not always apparent. In fact, by the time clients seek help, unemployment may bring as the presenting problem such symptoms as mental illness, ulcers, or chld abuse.

Briar goes on to say that the fact unemployment is a critical shaper of individual and family functioning is well documented by research from the Depression of the 1930's. In more recent years, however, the impact of unemployment has been somewhat disguised. Relative improvements in the standard of living over that of the 1930's, along with the perceived viability of programs such as public assistance, food stamps, and unemployment benefits, lead some to assume that the unemployment are surviving the hardships of modern day joblessness. Moreover, the absence of widespread depression reinforces the likelihood that joblessness is attributed to personal defects rather than system problems (1980, p. 896).

Recent research on unemployment suggests its strong linkage to spouse and child misuse. While such research generates important information about the effects of unemployment on individual and family functioning, it is constrained by designs that do not yield definitive findings about whether unemployment "causes" or is merely strongly associated with the social, emotional, economic, and health problems (Briar, 1980, p. 897).

Implications for Social Workers

According to Katherine Briar (1980) social workers are in positions where strong empirical evidence of causation is not an essential prerequisite to innovate problem-solving efforts. In fact, it is often the leadership

efforts of social workers that bring to public view the very problems and issues that later evolve into subjects of inquiry for basic research.

She says (1980, p. 898), "It might be expected that a profession concerned about the needs and stresses that lead people to seek services would be at the vanguard of policy and service innovations for the unemployed. While there are notable exceptions, the profession appears to have been relatively detached from unemployment issues. It may be argued that social workers are not trained to fully understand the sources and causes of unemployment and thus are ambivalent about work itself. The prevalent, but incorrect, assumption that the unemployed are jobless because of personal deficiency may also exacerbate social work beliefs that therapy is a necessary prerequisite to job acquisition and job security." (Briar, 1980, p. 898.)

Methodology

Rationale

In the Inland Northwest County there is an assumption that child abuse occurs more often when unemployment is high. People assume an unemployed person drinks too much, looses self-worth and community status, blames the world for his/her problems and "takes it out on the kids." The prevailing attitude of Child Protection Service Workers is that they will be under more pressure to investigate child abuse complaints during such periods. If these assumptions are true, then the concerns are justified. Communities and officials could be encouraged to develope innovative prevention programs rather then worry about the situation.

If the research indicates that the rate of unemployment had no real affect on the rate of child abuse, assumptions and myths could be altered and attitudes relaxed.

A warning to readers regarding this research needs to be stated. Although there appears to be sufficient raltionale for this research, it must be remembered that we are dealing with rates of unemployment and child abuse and not individual cases. There will be no empirical information to directly correlate the unemployed person as the abuser.

This study will examine any correlation between high and low periods of unemployment and high and low periods of child abuse. The study's variables are mentioned below. They could be the actual cause of child abuse and they may or may not be related to unemployment. Intensive future study would be needed to show the correlation of those variables to child abuse.

Hypothesis

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the hypothesis that the child abuse rate is directly correlated with the unemployment rate.

Population to be Studied

X County has a population of 10,390. The largest community in X County has a population of 3,883 and the smallest has a population of 15. There are seven communities whose populations total approximately 6,000. Most families live on farms or small acreages or in the largest community.

The majority of seasonal workers are employed by Potlatch Corporation, the U.S. Forest Service, Potlatch Timber Protection Agency, a dam, a national fish hatchery, private ranches, farms, and private lumber companies also hire seasonal employees.

This total number of employees will be the study population. Times of the year when the number of these employees decreases will indicate the layoff periods.

Operational Definitions

Reported cases of child abuse will include complaints received by phone or personally regarding a child who is endangered by a guardian. The term child abuse will include abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse. Data will be collected from the Child Protection Services of a state social service agency. The number of actual cases of child abuse will be counted. These will be those cases which were investigated, substantiated, and opened for services.

The monthly figures of substantiated child abuse cases over the past five year period (1978 through 1982) will be collected.

Unemployment rate by sex will not be determined in this study.

Monthly unemployment statistics will be obtained from a state department of employment in X County in the Inland Northwest. The figures used will be those that are revised and unadjusted.

Sampling and Design

The parameter of X County designates the sampling area.

This will be a multiple subject survey using a quasi-experimental design. Unemployment will be the independent intervening variable. A correlation between unemployment and child abuse will be explored.

Variables

1. Dependent variable

   Child abuse

2. Independent variable

   Unemployment

3. Intervening (contaminating) variables

   a. Unforeseen expenses, e.g., medical.

b. Loss of trust and confidence in spouse.

c. Unforeseen events, e.g.; daughter runs away with boyfriend.

d. Holidays with added expenses and unrealistic expectations.

e. Households without children.

f. The rate of fish return to the Hatchery.

Anticipated factors which will affect the study

Some timber mills stockpile timber and operate all yearlong, however, small mills normally do not; they close depending on the availability of lumber. The demand from the housing and paper industry, restrictions imposed by the U.S. Forest Service affects employment rates.

Yearly layoffs may be inconsistent because of environmental factors and 1982 will be unusually high as a result of the general economy.

Findings

The hypothesis that the child abuse rate is directly correleated with the unemployment rate was not supported by the data collected.

Table I compares the numbers and means of substantiated child abuse cases with numbers and means of the revised and unadjusted unemployment rates. The years 1978 and 1979 were the highest years of child abuse cases having 224 cases both years. The years 1981 and 1982 were the lowest with 170 and 154 cases respectively. The year 1978 had the lowest rate of unemployment with a total of 6,784 unemployed. The year 1982 had the highest rate with 10,024 unemployed. This would suggest a negative correlation.

Table II illustrates the means of the total 5 year data on a monthly basis. Table III ranks that data and again indicates no correlation.

The graph depicting the year by year monthly fluctuations illustrate very little correlation. The year 1982 does appear to show some similar pattern the first 6 or 7 months, however not the remainder of the year.

Using mean figures to calibrate the Pearsonian Product Moment Correlation coefficient to determine the predicted association, the result was -.008. This indicates no correlation between unemployment rates and child abuse rates.

Using the actual numbers of both factors, the result was -.03. This again suggests no predictability.

Other Findings

April was consistently the highest month of unemployment in X County. This can be attributed to what is known in the area as spring "breakup". This occurs every year when the temperature rises and paved road surfaces change and cannot sustain heavy truck loads of timber. When the ground is frozen there is no problem but when snow and frost melts, the roads become unstable and the pavement will break under heavy weights. Truck traffic is restricted by State law until conditions improve. Since this happens every year truck drivers know they will be restricted from driving their loads of logs to the mills.

The dirt roads in the woods used by tree fallers and operators of heavy equipment to move them turn to mud and are impossible for use. Therefore, when the trees cannot be harvested and moved to the mills many employees are affected. Woods workers, machine operators, truck drivers, and forestry mill workers are all affected. They must be laid off until the dirt roads dry up and become useable. Some mills are able to stockpile logs so that they can continue operations until the piles are used up.

This is also the period when farmers are waiting to plant their summer crops. The fields are too muddy and the chance of seed rot and/or refreezing becomes a factor in determing when to plant. Therefore, they wait until they are reasonably sure that it will not freeze again. This results in 1 or 2 months of waiting.

Unemployment in X County in 1982 was much higher then normal because of the unusual nationwide decrease in the market for wood products.

Although there were consistently the same months every year with high rates of unemployment, there were no consistent similar months of high child abuse rates. September does show a tendency to be the highest month, however it was not consistent every year.

It should be noted that April 1982 had the highest unemployment rate and the highest child abuse rate.

There is also a drop in employment and child abuse simultaneously. One of the reasons for this might be that with such an unusual high rate of unemployment due to a depressed lumber market, people who were unaccustomed to being unemployed found themselves without jobs. In fact a number of mills closed causing not only layoffs, but loss of jobs. In X County there are very few opportunities for employment besides woods work. The majority of the remaining jobs are held by federal employees. With this increased stress one could speculate that family problems increased and child abuse could occur.

Summary

There is no evidence from the findings that the child abuse rate is directly correlated with the unemployment rate in X County.

There is also no evidence that the rise in the rate of unemployment can predict the rise in the rate of child abuse.

These findings do not support the literature that attributes low economic factors as a causative factor of child abuse.

Speculations

The following speculations may help explain the findings in this study:

X County has a consistently high rate of unemployment yearly because of seasonal factors.

March and April had the highest unemployment rates every year largely due to spring "breakup". Possibly March and April unemployment could be a dependent variable. It is known that both child abuse and unemployment will occur in X County. Unusual weather conditions or fluctuations in the lumber market might be possible independent variables.

If high unemployment does occur at the same time every year, one may assume that many of the same persons are affected every year. This may explain why there is no correlation with child abuse. People can usually plan ahead by expecting, anticipating, and economically preparing for the layoff periods. It is possibly an accepted phenomena in X County. The communities then would also anticipate it and little, if any, stigma would be attached to those families affected. These factors would result in less stress than in areas where layoffs and unemployment is a rare occasion and not anticipated. X County employees also realize that sooner or later their job will be there when conditions permit and are not left with attitudes of failure or hopelessness.

Also, there are large numbers layed off at the same time and possibly they form their own support groups, repair machinery, visit, enjoy a vacation and/or rest. They may actually experience less stress then while working. It is interesting to note that during the month of September over the 5 year period when child abuse is the highest, unemployment is lowest. However, other months do not correspond. There appears to be a stronger correlation between employment and abuse than unemployment and abuse.

In areas where unemployment is not an anticipated, expected, and economically planned for event, the results of this study might be different. Therefore, care should be exercised in generalizing the present study beyond its statistical universe, but it is felt that the findings raise many interesting questions worthy of continued research efforts.

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RANKING OF 6 YR. MONTHLY MEANS FROM LOWEST TO HIGHEST

	CHILD ABUSE		UNEMPLOYMENT
JUNE	11	AUGUST	403
NOVEMBER	12	SEPTEMBER	442
MARCH	14	JULY	443
MAY	15	OCTOBER	567
JULY	15	FEBRUARY	635
DECEMBER	15	NOVEMBER	636
AUGUST	16	JUNE	645
APRIL	18	JANUARY	650
OCTOBER	19	DECEMBER	722
JANUARY	20	MAY	820
SEPTEMBER	21	MARCH	1020
FEBRUARY	22	APRIL	1028

SURVEY TABLE I

COMPARISONS OF TOTALS OF ABUSE AND UNEMPLOYMENT

	1978		1979		1980		1981		1982	
	Abuse	Unemployment	Abuse	Unemployment	Abuse	Unemployment	Abuse	Unemployment	Abuse	Unemployment
JAN	24	710	14	533	15	531	20	591	26	551
FEB	13	687	19	625	*43	516	15	512	16	643
MAR	10	1123	13	725	13	1006	19	909	15	1154
APR	18	1059	15	1043	19	1050	11	777	34	*1206
MAY	28	818	15	909	17	813	7	492	13	1085
JUN	12	***	8	399	8	602	7	703	10	969
JUL	6	390	21	326	18	567	22	375	14	558
AUG	18	282	33	483	22	360	**4	374	**4	530
SEP	40	346	25	***	11	353	19	401	13	566
OCT	18	*231	33	***	29	499	12	568	9	1099
NOV	20	471	8	***	8	575	8	666	7	751
DEC	17	667	20	557	12	538	10	975	9	912
TOTALS	224	6784	224	5600	215	7410	154	7343	170	10024
$\bar{X}$ MEAN	19	617	19	622	18	618	13	612	14	835

* Highest
** Lowest
*** Not Available

SURVEY TABLE II

COMPARISONS OF FIVE-YEAR DATA BY MONTHLY MEANS

1978 -- 1982

MONTH	UNEMPLOYMENT $\bar{X}$ No.	UNEMPLOYMENT $\bar{X}$ %	ABUSE $\bar{X}$ No.
DEC	583	15	20
JAN	597	15	21
FEB	983	23	14
MAR	1027	26	19
APR	819	20	16
MAY	668	15	9
JUN	443	11	16
JUL	406	10	16
AUG	417	10	22
SEP	599	16	20
OCT	616	16	10
NOV	730	18	14

Unemployment: $\bar{X}$ No. = Mean of actual number of unemployed persons in X County.
$\bar{X}$ % = Mean of % (rounded off) of total work force that is unemployed in X County.
Abuse: $\bar{X}$ No. = Mean of actual number of substantiated child abuse cases in X County.

* 1978 and 1979 unemployment rates were unavailable.

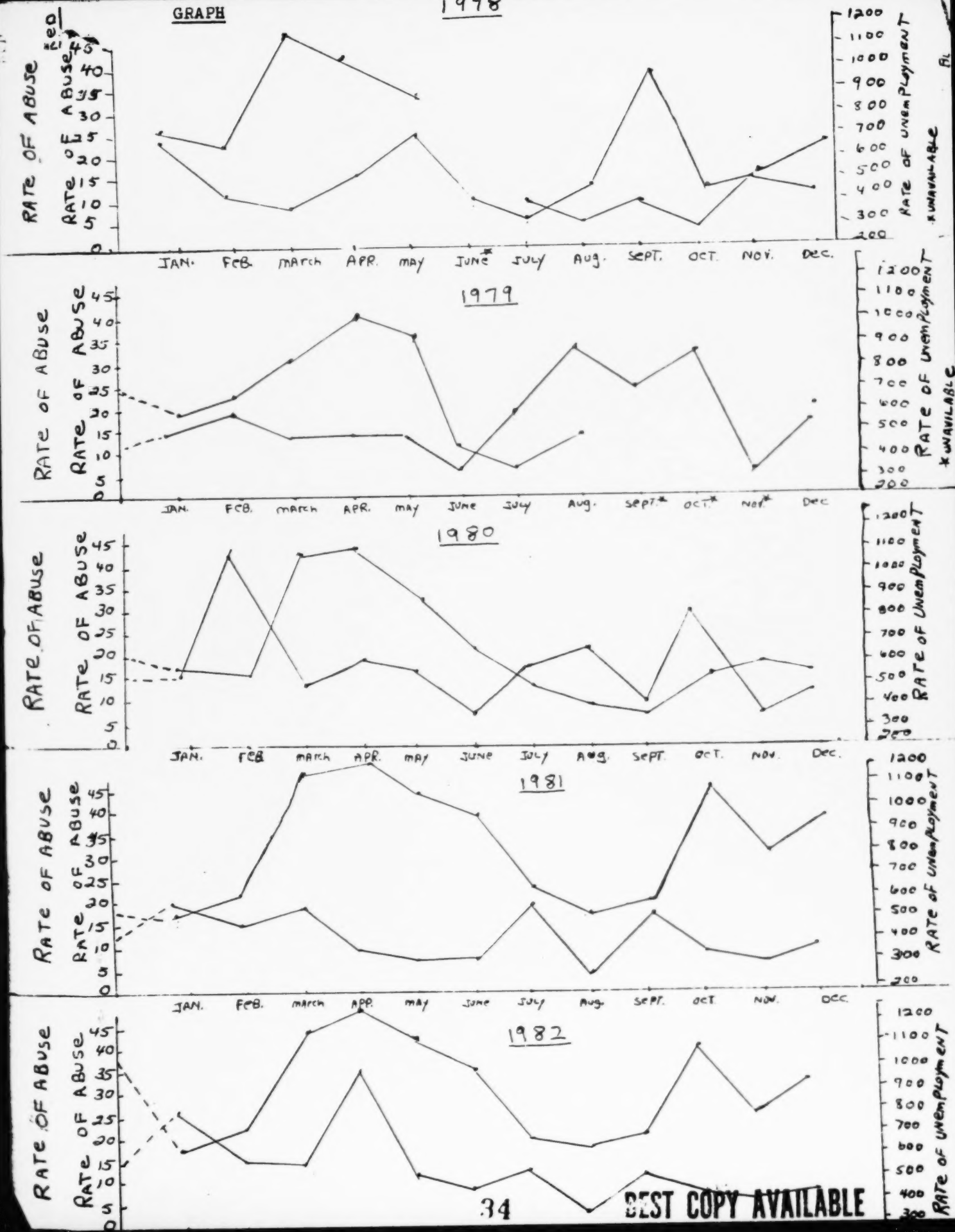
SURVEY TABLE III

RANKING FROM HIGHEST TO LOWEST MONTHLY RATES
OF (A) UNEMPLOYMENT AND (B) CHILD ABUSE BY MONTHLY MEANS

MONTH	UNEMPLOYMENT No.	%	MONTH	CHILD ABUSE No.
APR	1027	26	SEP	22
MAR	983	23	FEB	21
MAY	819	20	JAN	20
DEC	730	18	OCT	20
JUN	668	15*	APR	19
NOV	616	16	MAY	16
OCT	599	16	JUL	16
FEB	597	15	AUG	16
JAN	583	15	MAR	14
JUL	443	11	DEC	14
SEP	417	10	NOV	10
AUG	406	10	JUN	9

*9 months used for averaging

GRAPH



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